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TAGS: PGOV PTER PREL YM

SUBJECT: YEMENI TERRORIST ROLL-CALL: BADAWI STILL IN JAIL,
BANNA POSTS BOND, AL-QUSO RELEASED IN 2007

REF: SANAA 00314

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Angie Bryan, per reasons 1.4(b)
and (d)

¶1. (U) Jaber al-Banna, a Yemeni-American among the FBI's most wanted terrorism suspects and who was indicted in 2002 in the United States for "providing material support to terrorists" (reftel), posted bond at a Yemeni security court on March 9. He is due back in court on March 23.

¶2. (S/NF) Al-Banna's latest appearance comes less than a week after the ROYG Political Security Organization (PSO) reluctantly and unofficially confirmed to PolMil that Fahd al-Quso, one of the convicted co-conspirators (along with Jamal al-Badawi) in the USS Cole bombing, had been released from prison in May 2007. The PSO asserted that al-Quso had served enough of his sentence to qualify for parole, but that the PSO is monitoring him. (Note: According to our calculations, al-Quso has served roughly six of his ten years. End note.)

¶3. (S/NF) Al-Quso was arrested by the ROYG in 2000 in connection with the USS Cole bombing and was allegedly the one who videotaped the attack. He was held in a PSO prison in Aden until 2003, when he (along with several others, including al-Badawi) escaped and was on the run for a little over a year. He was indicted in May 2003 at the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York for unlawfully and knowingly killing U.S. nationals. He was recaptured and convicted by the ROYG in 2004 and sentenced to 10 years, but with credit for time served between 2000-2003.

¶4. (S/NF) On a more positive note, when Emboffs conducted a surprise visit to the PSO prison in Sana'a on March 10, they found Jamal al-Badawi exactly where he should be -- behind bars.

¶5. (S/NF) COMMENT: The ROYG continues to withhold information from the Embassy on such releases. The Embassy did not find out that al-Quso had been released in May 2007 until a February 2008 newspaper article on al-Banna referenced the release of an individual whose name resembled, but didn't match, al-Quso's. The striking similarity prompted Emboffs to follow up with the PSO, who only very reticently unofficially admitted that they had in fact released al-Quso ten months ago. They were clearly unhappy that we made the connection from the press article. END COMMENT

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